

THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

pro bono humani generis

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BW

Joshua Lederberg
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Dr. Alexei Arbatov
Academy of Sciences
Moscow, Russia

Dear Dr. Arbatov:

I was happy to have the opportunity to meet you again last week.

As I reiterated to you, there remain many uncertainties about the full story of the anthrax epidemic in Sverdlovsk in 1979. These evidently are shared by many citizens there, according to recent stories in the Wall Street Journal, with which I believe you are familiar.

The most satisfactory resolution of the event would be an independent investigation by politically accountable civil authorities, and full publication of their findings. When these can be subject to the critical scrutiny of your own public, which now has ready access to the open press, that would be the greatest reassurance of the authenticity of the findings.

Our NAS-CISAC committee has long held that nothing could be more potent than self-inspection (cum cooperative verification) on such matters. It is gratifying that current circumstances make this the most realistic approach to this difficult problem. There remain other issues in BW verification, but a vigorous and sincere effort to clear up this one would be extremely constructive; the converse also holds.

Events of 12 years ago should not loom so large in complicating the atmosphere of bilateral relations; but I have to tell you they continue to have a strong symbolic impact on the thinking of many influential policy makers here.

I very much appreciate your willingness to share these concerns with Mr. Shevardnadze.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg